1: Longrigg G-4, 5 (ca. 1915-1940) MH1 Iraq MH1

northern 'Iraq. In June 1937 continued lawlessness at Samawa led to military operations on the habitual pattern, with destruction of villages, tribal attacks on the qadhā town, and (it was said) the shooting of hostages by the Army. Deep as was the impression made on the tribes by this treatment, peace never returned to these troubled regions during the life-time of the Sulaymani Ministry. In the towns, security was reasonably maintained, and isolated acts of anti-Jewish violence which had occurred in Baghdad in 1936 were not repeated.

The Ministry remained unhappy in the political sphere. The general elections ordered in November 1936 and completed in February 1937 produced a Chamber from which indispensable compliance with Ṣidqi's wishes had excluded the bulk of former Deputies and all but twelve of the Reformists; but had admitted, as a conciliatory favour, some ill-chosen wildlings from the Euphrates tribes. In the four months of the Extraordinary Session from February to June 1937 the Chamber was uneasy and divided, with painful friction between the Ministry's own ill-assorted followers. This, and the frustrations of their minority position, and their dislike of the re-adopted harsh policy at Samawa, led in June to the resignation of the four Reformist ministers. While still in office their influence, especially that of Chadirchi, had inspired, perhaps encouraged, serious strikes among industrial workers. So were explained the successive strikes at the Kut barrage, in the drilling-areas of the B.O.D. Company, in the Railway workshops, among the Port workers and the Najf weavers, and among the 'Iraq Petroleum Company's labour at Kirkuk. These strikes, whether industrially justified or not, reflected a new spirit of labour self-consciousness not necessarily unhealthy—and a new political weapon.

Ḥikmat's hopes of strengthening his Cabinet by the inclusion in it of leading statesmen—Nuri Sa'id himself, or Jamil al-Madfa'i—could not but fail since few now trusted Bakr or the uneasy régime itself. Of the four new ministers, two, 'Ali Maḥmud al-Shaykh and Muḥammad 'Ali Maḥmud, were Sunni lawyer-politicians and functionaries, and two, 'Abbas Mahdi and Ja'far Ḥamandi, were Shi'is of similar background. They were posted to the Ministries of Justice, Finance, Works, and Education respectively; but they were politically of little weight. The breach between the Reform movement and the Government was now complete; the People's Reform League was suppressed, and prominent Communists, real or alleged, were arrested. Two of the most active, 'Abd al-Qadir and Yusif, sons of Isma'il, fled to Paris. The Army dominated, ever more obviously, the Prime Minister and his Government.

The position was one which Bakr Ṣidqi could not but abuse. He

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composed of overworked officials, could accomplish little. The Amending Law passed in 1942 to the Labour Code of 1936 began to bear fruit; it provided for improved conditions for women workers, the prohibition of child labour, paid holidays, compensation for injuries, and arbitration of labour disputes. Under the Pachachi Ministry a beginning was made with the establishment of Labour Exchanges—the more necessary as the release of workers from British military employment was already creating unemployment. A number of hopeful trade unions were organized, including those of weavers, shoe-makers, oil workers, cigarette makers, and a half-dozen less important; all were directed by organizers whom underground Communism made every effort to seduce. Committees were set up to produce standard scales of wages and conditions. The growing self-consciousness of urban workers, whose greatest concentrations were in the oil companies, railways, and Port, was shown by a 'Rights of Workmen' movement which demanded a newspaper devoted to its interests, an insurance system, and wage-arbitration boards. A railway-workers' strike in April 1945 ended only with heavy-handed suppression of strike and union alike; examples were thenceforward to be frequent of the organization of strikes among workers for political purposes with little regard to their actual grievances.

An important step, long in contemplation yet not without its dangers, was the passage of major amendments to the Liwā Administration Law; the effect was to confer greater powers on local officials and Provincial Councils, and thus to facilitate local development and improved services. A revision of the Civil Code was at the same time decided, and a delegation from Baghdad spent most of 1945 in Cairo in consultation with Egyptian jurists.

Concurrently with the departure, at the end of the war, of a number of the few surviving British officials, steps were taken to recruit from Great Britain or Egypt the new experts—technical, medical, or educational—for whom the period now opening would call. An effort, of no great forcefulness, was made to eradicate corruption from the body of officialdom. Army reform in 1945 showed good results with the forced retirement of some scores of inefficient but well-befriended officers; rearmament proceeded in aircraft, vehicles, and artillery from British stocks, though not without misunderstandings and reproaches; and a marked rise in standards of training, quartering, equipment, and service conditions was observed. The Army, well supported by the Regent, began in fact again to approach a condition in which active operations could be attempted. In the Police, which appeared to have lapsed somewhat but not tragically from their old high standards, the strength of the force was increased from 10,500 in 1939 to

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were threatened early in 1947 between the younger generation of the Barzani Sayids and the Jaf, and in Arbil the peace was barely kept between the Pishdar and Piran. An earthquake occurred in Panjwin in October, with loss of life. The situation in Khuzistan, where the Communist Tudeh Party in mid-summer 1946 was able to produce conditions of disorder at the Abadan refinery, called for the dispatch of British troops from India to Shu'ayba as a precaution, to which the Baghdad Government was criticized by the Opposition for consenting. A serious strike was organized by politicians of Communist sympathy in July among the Iraq Petroleum Company's labour at Kirkuk, although pay and conditions of service there were well above current 'Iraqi levels. It was settled through Government arbitration, but not before the interruption of an illegal meeting in Kirkuk town by the police had led to bloodshed, a tragic episode for which publicists hastened to blame the Company itself.

In the field of politics the Prime Minister felt himself forced by the extravagancies of the press and party-leaders to adopt a policy of suppression. Two newspapers were prohibited and arrests made after a clash between demonstrators and police in June, when some 3,000 students and workers demanded immediate British withdrawal from 'Iraq and a favourable settlement of the Palestine Question. In August and September more papers were suppressed for inflammatory writing, whereon a strike of newspaper employees was declared. Members of the Communist 'Anti-Zionist League' were sentenced for the issue of subversive leaflets, and the *Daily Worker* was banned throughout the country. The effect of these steps, which as ever the politicians seemed first by their actions wantonly to invite, then by outcry to execrate, was to widen the gap between the responsible Government and the irresponsible aspirants to power, and, somehow, to confirm the latter in their identification of the British with the governing class. The 'Umari Ministry, approved by conservative elements for its firmness, gained little favour from its implacable critics by its announced ten-year plan (at an ill-chosen moment of looming financial crisis) or by such gestures as the end-of-Ramadhan donation to officials, the abolition of secondary school fees, and the opening of a relief fund for the Panjwin earthquake victims.

In the foreign field of inter-Arab united effort, Arshad's policy was correct and acceptable. 'Iraq had welcomed the new status which Transjordan (hereafter the Hashimite Kingdom of the Jordan) had gained by its treaty with Great Britain early in 1946, and was represented by the Regent and Prime Minister at a conference at Shuna which sealed 'Iraq–Jordan 'identity of views'; and, concurrently with general Arab League moves and meetings

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pletion of the Kirkuk–Arbil extension and its Lesser Zab bridge: of the railway and road bridge[1] at Baghdad, opened late in 1950: of the Musayib bridge leading to Karbalā: and of new stations at Ba'quba, Diwaniya, Naṣiriya and elsewhere. New rolling stock was ordered and by 1950 delivered. Progress was made in erecting a grandiose combined station and administrative headquarters at Baghdad West, and in redesigning the yards and depots there; but the high cost of these projects, the diminution of receipts by road and air competition (in spite of good traffic in grain and oilfield materials), and losses due to repeated river flooding rapidly exhausted the war-time surplus and led to the need to borrow first from Government in 1946, then from London—a loan of £3 million —in 1950, before supplies and contractors could be paid and work could proceed. Working conditions in the railway system were disturbed by the strikes elsewhere mentioned in 1945, 1946, and 1949. The Jewish employees of the traffic branch were replaced in 1949 by imported Pakistani staff, and the training of 'Iraqis to replace these and the few remaining British executives was accelerated. The status and composition of the Railway Board was unchanged, though criticized by the press as outdated and insufficiently 'national'. The post of Director-General was passed by H. C. Smith to W. J. Moffat in 1950, and an 'Iraqi, General Isma'il Ṣafwat, assumed the post in 1952.

'Iraq Airways was initiated by the Railway as a subordinate enterprise in 1945, and started service in 1946 with five light aircraft hired from Great Britain. In the following year the hired aircraft were replaced by its own machines, and it extended its range from Baghdad–Baṣra outwards to Mosul, Cairo, and Damascus, and by 1948 could, thanks to reciprocal agreements, offer transport weekly or monthly to Teheran, Karachi, and Ankara. The service, to which British Overseas Airways Corporation acted as technical advisers and agents, was efficiently maintained but, thanks to competition and high costs, financially unprofitable. British, American, Dutch, French and other foreign airlines continued to use 'Iraqi airports. An expenditure of over ID 2 million on aerodromes formed part of the six-year development plan. The meteorological service, begun in 1936 in a single room, now maintained under the Ministry of Defence a dozen stations and many rainfall-observation posts, used its own wireless links, and broadcast weather reports for Baghdad area half-hourly.

Telecommunications had, by the close of the period, reached a high standard. Trunk land-lines had been overhauled, often duplicated and widely extended; automatic telephone exchanges

[1] The bridges were built by Messrs. Holloway Bros.; earthwork on the Kirkuk–Arbil line was handled by Messrs. Balfour Beatty.